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NEWS RELEASE

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Embargo until: Wednesday, October 13th, 2004 – 10:30 a.m.

Two R.I. Elementary-School Teachers Win \$25,000 Milken Educator Awards

Two elementary-school teachers were named today (Oct. 13th) as the Rhode Island recipients of the 2004 National Educator Awards from the Milken Family Foundation.

Susan M. Toohey Kaye, of the Washington Oak School, in Coventry, and Catherine T. “Kate” Sharkey, of the Cottrell F. Hoxsie School, in Warwick, received their awards this morning in surprise ceremonies at their schools. Each Milken Educator receives a \$25,000 award.

Susan Toohey Kaye, who is certified as an elementary-school teacher, an early-childhood teacher, and a reading specialist, was the first elementary-school teacher in the state to achieve certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. For the past three years, she has served as a mentor for other teachers seeking National Board Certification. A first-grade teacher, she has taught in Coventry for 17 years, and she serves as the Professional Development Coordinator for the Coventry Teachers Alliance.

“She is a problem solver, a team player, and is always child-centered,” said one colleague in nominating her for the award. Said another: “Her reputation as an amazing educator is well deserved.”

Ms. Toohey Kaye lives in Scituate.

Kate Sharkey has been teaching in the Warwick schools for 13 years. Her colleagues describe her as “a huge promoter of reading” who has an “amazing ability to get kids to learn...even from mistakes.”

A teacher of grades 5 and 6, she is known for her innovative programs such as a “living museum,” in which her pupils dress to represent the period or culture they are studying and lead visitors through the “exhibits.”

The youngest of 11 children, Ms. Sharkey says that she became a teacher to help children believe in themselves and “achieve their dreams.” She holds a master’s degree in elementary education from Rhode Island College, and she lives in Warwick.

The Milken Family Foundation 2004 National Educator Awards provide recognition and unrestricted financial awards of \$25,000 to exceptional educators around the nation. This year, there will be 100 recipients. Rhode Island has been part of the Milken program for 14 years, and 61 educators in the state have received the awards.

